

Empathy Towards Animals: Preventing Adolescents from Violence

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Abstract

Violent behaviour is a deviant conduct rejected by all modern societies. Violence is totally unaccepted when the victims are humans, but it is considered less severe or important when victims are non-human animals. However, animal abuse may act as a predictor of interhuman violence when youths reach young adulthood. Youths that lack or show low levels of empathy may use violence more frequently than those who show higher levels of empathy. Throughout a long-year school-based primary prevention program addressed to students of secondary school, it is expected to increase their levels of empathy by working on human and non-human animal emotions, self-esteem, anger and frustration, and prosocial attitudes. All these items should prevent teenagers from violence toward humans and animals during their adolescence and adulthood.

Key words: adolescence, animal abuse, violence, empathy.

Resum

El comportament violent és una conducta desviada rebutjada per les societats modernes. La violència no està en absolut acceptada quan la víctima és humana, però es considera menys greu o menys important quan la víctima d'aquesta violència és un animal no humà. Malgrat això, el maltracte animal pot actuar com a predictor de violència interpersonal quan el jovent arriba a l'edat adulta. Els joves que manquen o mostren nivells baixos d'empatia poden usar la violència amb més freqüència que els joves que mostren nivells més alts d'empatia. Mitjançant un programa de prevenció primària adreçat a estudiants de secundària durant un curs escolar, es pretén incrementar el nivell d'empatia d'aquests joves a través del treball de les emocions, l'autoestima, la ràbia i la frustració, i les actituds pro-socials. Tots aquests ítems haurien de prevenir els adolescents de la violència cap a persones i animals durant l'adolescència i l'edat adulta.

Paraules clau: adolescència, abús animal, violència, empatia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of time in which youths spend more time away from adult supervision and start to face new situations and feelings. In addition to the biological, emotional and physical change during teenage years, there is a myriad of circumstances that may destabilise healthy youths and cause on them deviant behaviour (Tremblay, 2003). For that reason, it is important to give them tools and prevent the violence that they may exercise.

Most of the times, animal abuse is understood as the conduct that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering, or distress to and/or death of an animal (Ascione, 1993), in which often only domestic animals are considered victims of animal abuse. However, animal abuse goes further. Legal and socially accepted practices such as hunting, animal experimentation, factory farming (Flynn, 2012), and the use of animals for entertainment (Agnew, 1998) are also defined as animal abuse. According to Beirne (1999), animal abuse may be physical, psychological, or emotional; it may involve active maltreatment or passive neglect or omission; and it may be direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional. That is, not only the practices that are legally penalised may act as a predictor of further violent behaviour, but also the social accepted ones.

There is evidence that adolescence, like childhood, is a sensitive period in which ongoing brain development can be influenced by environmental factors (McCormick, 2010). Simultaneously, youths start being aware of the problems and conflicts around them, and their levels of injustice perceived increase, being strongly associated with situational anger, which is at the same time strongly associated with deviant behaviour (Rebellon, Manasse, Van Gundy and Cohn, 2012). Cruelty to animals is frequently part of the landscape of violence in which youth participate and to which they are exposed to. The number of animals victims of such abuse is difficult to estimate, as it is the number of young people who perpetrate it (Ascione, 2001; Muscari, 2004).

Lately, being conscious of this problem, humanitarian education programs have been implemented in some elementary and primary schools to prevent violence against human and non-human animals. Following this tendency, the main objective of this paper is to create a primary prevention program to reduce the likelihood of youths

engaging in interpersonal violence and animal abuse during their adolescence and adulthood. Besides working to increase their levels of empathy, the program also encourages youth to think about their beliefs and attitudes toward animals, teaches them to understand and manage their own emotions, and helps them to realise how powerful their actions can be to make themselves feel better as well as people around them.

Is essential that the participants are students from secondary school because the program seeks meditation and awareness. However, its application is compatible with previous programs in which youths might have participated in primary school. That is, it can be applied as a continuation of an earlier related program or as a new one.

The paper is structured in four main sections. The first one exposes the literature review, where it is explained the relationship between age and delinquency, animal abuse and its relation with other crimes, and the protective factors that can be applied to decrease violent behaviour in youths. The second section presents the prevention program, explaining in detail its application context, stages, timing and content. The evaluation of the program takes place in the third section. Finally, in the discussion, there are gathered up the strengths and weak spots of the program, as well as its limitations and suggestions about future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Age and delinquency

Several studies recognise early life as the period of time where physical aggression is more violent and more frequent, decreasing in the following preschool years. However, a minority of children increase their frequency as they reach adolescence, specially those who had a high trajectory of physical aggression during childhood (Bernard, Snipes and Gerould, 2010).

Studies have shown that children who do not learn alternatives to physical aggression during infancy increase their probability to lack of attention, be hyperactive, be anxious and do not help others in need. The lack of learning alternatives to violence during the first years of life seems to cause long term negative consequences because of the deficit of social adaptation (Tremblay, 2003).

Despite the fact that early life seems to be crucial to record antisocial behaviour, the risk of committing violent crimes appears during the adolescence. The rates of offending appear highest at the age of 17, and drop hastily in young adulthood. By the age of 20, the number of active offenders decreases by over 50% (Blumstein and Cohen, 1987). Nevertheless, the younger an individual onset in violence, the higher is the probability to establish the violent conduct as stable and permanent in their life (Moffitt, 1993; Garrido, Stangeland, and Redondo, 2006).

Criminal career studies revealed that the most common age to initiate in criminal activities is during adolescence (Elliott, Huizinga and Menard, 1989). Because of that fact, youths between 12 and 18 years old are an important focus in criminology since they become physically stronger, their cognitive competence increases, are sexually mature, are given more freedom to act without adult supervision, and have autonomy to satisfy their needs. As a consequence of this fast biological, psychological and sociological development, adolescence is a period in which opportunities and motivation to develop an antisocial behaviour increase (Tremblay, 2003).

According to Moffitt (1993), an early life aggression acts as a predictor of permanent deviant behaviour, since the explanation of the maintenance of delinquency after the period of adolescence is found in early delinquency. However, criminal violence will

depend on other agents such as personal, social and environmental factors (Garrido, Stangeland, and Redondo, 2006).

Sampson and Laub (1992) provided a similar explanation of delinquency. They explained that stability in delinquency is a result of a “cumulative continuity”, that is, delinquent behaviour increases the likelihood of school failure, causes weak social bonds to school, friends and family, and embroils the development of new adult social bonds as marriage or employment (Moffitt, 1993). In other words, failure in learning conventional prosocial alternatives ensnares deviant lifestyle, and antisocial behaviour appears as a consequence of the crimes.

Data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development was analysed by Piquero, Farrington, and Blumstein (2007). This data consisted in a longitudinal study of 411 South London males born in 1953, following the subjects from ages 10 to 40. In their analysis was found out that the frequency of violence peaked between ages 16 and 20, while the peak age of onset was 14.

As stated in the studies exposed, early onset in deviant behaviour increases the likelihood of a longer criminal career, greater overall offenses, and conviction for a wider variety of types of crimes, but the period where the crimes occur more often is during adolescence.

2.2 Animal abuse as a predictor of further interpersonal violence

The connection between cruelty to animals in childhood–early adolescence and adult violent criminal behaviour has been a topic of interest for decades (McDonald, 2012). Several studies have shown that animal abuse is very related with other criminal offences such as domestic violence, peer violence or bestiality.

A growing body of research indicates that young people who commit acts of cruelty toward animals rarely stop there. As well as other types of violent offences, animal abuse can be a warning sign of future violent behaviour, and may predict later violence towards people. In brief, psychological, sociological and criminological studies indicate that many violent offenders had committed repeated acts of serious animal cruelty during childhood and adolescence (McDonald, 2012). Besides a warning, animal abuse may also help to identify youth who are being victimized themselves (Ascione, 2001).

Animal abuse and interpersonal violence share common characteristics: both types of victims are living creatures, have a capacity to experience pain and distress, can display physical signs of their pain and distress, and may die as a result of inflicted injuries. Given these commonalities, it is not surprising that early research in this area examined the relation between childhood histories of animal abuse and later violent offending (Ascione, 2001). Like most of the crimes, animal abuse may occur alongside other illegal behaviour including assault, drug related offences, rape and sexual offences, theft, arson, and cock and dogfighting.

2.2.1 Animal abuse and domestic violence

In addition to violent crimes, cruelty to animals is considered a significant predictor of future domestic violence. Statistics show that 85 percent of women and 65 percent of children entering shelters suffered incidents of pet abuse in the family. Thirty-two percent of pet-owning victims of domestic abuse reported that one or more of their children had hurt or killed a pet, and approximately 25 percent of the battered women reported that concern for their pets' welfare had prevented them from seeking shelter sooner (McDonald, 2012). In a family context, threats of violence or actual violence against a pet may be used as a means of intimidating, frightening or exerting control over others (McPhedran, 2009).

In order to understand the relationship between reported childhood animal cruelty and adult acceptance of violence against women and children, Flynn (1999) examined a sample of 267 under-graduate psychology students. The results demonstrated that those who reported had been cruel to animals in childhood or adolescence showed more favourable attitudes towards corporal punishments (a wife being slapped by her husband, for instance) than respondents who did not report cruelty.

This behaviour could be explained through the Strain theory. Strained individuals may engage in animal abuse to reduce tension, seek revenge against those who have placed them under pressure, or manage the negative emotions associated with strain. Such actions are often reported in cases of family violence. Strained individuals often develop socially unacceptable forms of abuse (Agnew, 1998). On the contrary, socially accepted animal abuse (e.g., farm industry or animal experimentation) are not generally vehicles for controlling others, seeking revenge or accomplish masculinity.

Furthermore, animal abuse frequently exemplifies masculine traits such as aggression, domination, and the suppression of feeling. The reasons for animal abuse may include a desire to impress others with their capacity of violence, improve their aggressive skills, and compensate for feelings of weakness or vulnerability (Agnew, 1998).

2.2.2 Animal abuse and sexual offence

Another type of a very common offense in early violent offenders is animal sexual abuse, or commonly known as bestiality. It is the sexual molestation of animals by humans and it includes a wide range of behaviours. Like rape, this is an eroticization of violence, control and exploitation. In a study of 381 male juvenile offenders conducted by Fleming, Jory and Burton (2002), was found that 23 of 24 juveniles who admitted had abused animals sexually also recognised sexual offenses against humans.

In the Ressler, Burgess and Douglas' study (1988) in which were studied 28 incarcerated sexual homicide perpetrators, childhood animal abuse was reported by 36 percent of the perpetrators, and 46 percent admitted to abuse animals as adolescents. Thirty-six percent of these men said they had also abused animals in adulthood. In a study carried out by Tingle, Barnard, Robbins, Newman, and Hutchinson (1986), of 64 convicted male sex offenders, animal abuse during childhood or adolescence was reported by 48 percent of the rapists and 30 percent of the child molesters.

Taken together, these studies suggest that animal abuse is a predictor of adult offense, since it appears between one in four and nearly two in three violent adult offenders (Ascione, 2001).

2.2.3 Animal abuse, peer violence and pyromania

Despite the fact that animal abuse is a predictor of adult violence, offences committed by youths against peers cannot be forgotten. Gullone and Robertson (2008) assessed concurrent engagement in animal abuse and bullying behaviour in 241 adolescents aged 12 to 16 years old. Twenty-one percent reported abusing animals sometimes and 18 percent reported bullying others on at least one occasion the year before. Statistic analyses revealed witnessing animal abuse to be a common predictive factor for animal abuse and bullying.

Shahinfar, Kupersmidt and Matza (2001) found that highly aggressive adolescents were often victims and witnesses of violence themselves. The relation is found when, as a consequence of the abuse, the victim enhances the need for revenge and dominance of others through the desire of inflicting physical or psychological harm on the victim, feeling the perpetrator more powerful than the victim (Gullone and Robertson, 2008).

Regarding juvenile delinquency, it has been suggested that teenage boys may engage in animal cruelty to gain approval from their peers and to prove their masculinity. Compared with adults, youngsters tend to commit animal cruelty in the presence of others. As data shows, seven out of eight adult suspects were alone when committing abuse, but nearly one-half of youths (48 percent) abused as part of a group (Arluke and Luke, 1997). For that reason, common criminal activities committed by juvenile gang members are dogfighting and cockfighting. Usually the loser animal dies, is left to die or is killed by the owner, taking place in a context of gambling or entertainment (Boston Animal Control, 2003).

Finally, similar features have been assessed between firesetting and animal abuse. Both crimes are Conduct Disorder symptoms, may reflect developmental changes, may share etiological factors, may often be performed covertly, and may be early sentinels for later psychological problems (Lockwood and Ascione, 1998). Sakheim and Osborne (1994), in their study with samples of children who set fires (n=100) and those who did not (n=55), observed that fifty percent of the firesetters' parents reported that their children had been cruel to other children or animals, but only nine percent of parents of children who did not set fires reported the same. Similar results were concluded by Gullone and Robertson (2008).

2.2.4 Motivations for animal abuse

Despite the fact that child and adolescent motivations for animal abuse have not been studied as extensively as adults, Lockwood and Ascione (1998) classified in three typology groups motivations related to animal abuse.

The first category, called *exploratory or curious animal abuse*, takes place when children attend early elementary school and are poorly supervised, and lack of training on the physical care and human treatment of a variety of animals, especially family pets

and/or stray animals. Teaching children to be kind and caring and nurturing toward animals, that is to say “humane education” intervention by parents, childcare providers, and teachers seems to be sufficient to encourage desistance of animal abuse in these children.

The second category, described as *pathological animal abuse*, occurs at the ages of primary school, and animal abuse committed by these children may be symptomatic of psychological disturbances of varying severity. As an example, several studies have tied childhood animal abuse to childhood histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and exposure to domestic violence.

The third category, denominated *delinquent animal abuse*, encompass adolescents whose animal abuse may be one of a number of antisocial activities they carry out. In some cases, animal cruelty may be a component of gang activities such as initiation rites, or less formal group violence and destructiveness. The use of alcohol and other substances may be associated with animal abuse for these youth, and they may require both judicial and clinical interventions.

2.2.5 Aetiology of animal abuse

In order to understand the origin of animal abuse, attention must be paid to the family and community environments of young people lives. Following are presented the factors that have been associated with increased levels of animal abuse.

The first factor is corporal punishment from parents. In a survey of 267 undergraduates led by Flynn (1999), was found that perpetrating animal abuse was positively correlated with the frequency of their fathers’ use of corporal punishment in adolescence. Self-reports of animal abuse by men experiencing paternal corporal punishment in adolescence were 2.4 times higher than for men who were not physically disciplined.

The second factor is physical abuse. DeViney, Dickert and Lockwood (1983) found that animal abuse was significantly higher (88 percent) in families which child physical abuse was present than in families where other forms of child maltreatment occurred (34 percent). One or both parents and their children were responsible for abusing family pets.

The third factor is sexual abuse. Lane (1997) noted that juvenile sex offenders may include bestiality, sometimes combined with other violent behaviour toward animals. Adolescent sexual offenders may also use threats of harm to pets as a way of gaining compliance from their human victims.

The fourth factor is domestic violence, because as it has been said, animals may also be abused in the context of family violence between intimate adult partners. Child maltreatment and domestic violence increase the opportunity for children to be exposed to the abuse of animals. Even if adult family members do not abuse animals, some children may express the pain of their own victimisation by abusing vulnerable family pets.

On the other hand, however, according to the Social learning theory, the socialisation process is related with the models people are exposed to, the reinforcements and punishments received and the beliefs that are taught. This socialisation takes place through the family, school, peer group, religious institutions and media (Agnew, 1998). Since having access to families, peer groups and religious institutions seem to be complicated, schools appear to be the most accessible mean to socialise youths to develop appropriate social attitudes in case families fail in this point.

Following this theory, animal abuse is most likely to take place when individuals are unaware of the abusive consequences of their behaviour for animals, or do not think that their abusive behaviour is wrong but otherwise they benefit from this abuse (e.g., eat the flesh from an animal that has been haunted), since they have been socialised in ways that explicitly encourage or discourage certain types of animal abuse. Examples of socialisation could be the beliefs that farm animals are happy, animals do not feel pain, meat is necessary for a healthy diet, or animal experimentation is necessary for the benefit of the society (Agnew, 1998).

To sum up, animal abuse is rarely the only crime committed, but occurs together with other types of crimes such as domestic violence, gender violence, peer violence, bestiality and pyromania. Moreover, depending on the age in which individuals start their abuse toward animals, the motivation for such abuse will be experimental,

pathological or criminal. Finally, several factors can explain the origin of animal abuse in youths, occurring all of them during the socialisation process.

2.3 Protective factors toward animal abuse and interhuman violence

Throughout literature, empathy seems to be the main focus of researchers to reduce violent behaviour in children and teenagers. However, literature also shows that, up to now, empathy by itself is not enough to make youths desist from this kind of deviant behaviour. Because of that fact, other essential and relevant items such as enhancing respect, managing anger and frustration, and encouraging prosocial attitudes, are also taken on board to reduce violent behaviour. Nevertheless, following the criteria of other researchers, empathy remains the main focus on this paper and it is expounded in depth.

2.3.1 Empathy

The term of empathy involves emotional and cognitive components, which entails understanding or identifying with another individual's emotional experience. Empathy is understood as a prosocial behaviour, and for that reason moral developmental theories conceive empathy as a motivator to elicit altruism and inhibiting aggression (McPhedran, 2009).

With regard to the association between empathy, interhuman violence and animal cruelty, Ascione (1992) conducted a year-long educational program to a low-risk children where the humane treatment of animals was the focus of the program. According to the results of this study, the ability to experience feelings of empathy toward animals acted as one of the factors to prevent interpersonal violence and animal cruelty (McPhedran, 2009; Faver, 2010). On the contrary, youths that show deficiency to experience or perceive the pain that they inflict on others, increase the risk to exhibit violence during adulthood (Ascione, 1993; McPhedran, 2009), being lack of empathy pointed out as one of the possible causes that underlie animal abuse (Miller, 2001).

According to Flynn (1999), animal abuse represses benevolence and compassion at the same time as it is being socialised with the use of violence. As a consequence, offenders might approve and commit intimate violence. Moreover, lack of empathy usually appears with manipulative behaviour, absence of guilt or remorse, and superficial charm. These characteristics represent diagnostic criteria for antisocial personality

disorder in adults. In studies of criminal offenders, male offenders consistently display lower empathy levels than males in control samples.

As it has been exposed, accumulated research suggests that parental aggression toward children may contribute to the deficit of empathy in childhood development. Research demonstrates that abusive parents tend to have low levels of empathy and consequently do not express behaviours likely to contribute to the development of empathy in their children (McPhedran, 2009). According to this statement, empathy may in itself be a learned behaviour.

2.3.2 Respect for human and non-human life

Respect for animal and human lives seem to be a positive consequence of the levels of empathy. However, according to Beirne (2004), the link between animal abuse and interhuman violence should also be sought in those institutionalized legal practices where animal abuse is routine, widespread, and socially acceptable. As well as empathy, respect to others species (humans or non-humans) is also a learned behaviour during the process of socialisation.

Agnew (1998) observed that most of the harm done to animals –hunting and trapping, factory farming, product testing, animal experimentation, and use of animals for entertainment- are legal. It might be that high levels of socially accepted violence toward animals contributes to unacceptable violence animal abuse. The more animals are harmed in ways that society deems acceptable, the more likely individuals may be to engage in animal cruelty, and the less likely individuals and social institutions may be to seriously sanction it (Flynn, 2001).

Beirne (2004) has a similar point of view, exposing that both assaultive children and slaughterhouse workers might be so desensitized by the act of animal abuse that subsequently they show lower levels of compassion for the suffering and welfare of humans and non-humans. In reducing abusers' compassion, animal abuse might be found to increase tolerance or acceptance of pro-violent attitudes and, thereby, to foster interhuman violence. Quite the opposite, children who show respect to animals might be more likely to become adults who act more sensitively toward humans. In other words, compassion, the understanding of others' suffering and the desire to ameliorate it, may

be strongly related with high levels of respect toward integrity of humans and non-humans

2.3.3 Anger and frustration

Throughout the emphasis of healthy and positive relationships in youths' environment, and working on the development of skills and tools to solve problems, the levels of safety and respect in youths' relationships seem to increase. In like manner, cognitive-behavioural programs including anger control and interpersonal problem solving are related to higher recidivism reductions (De Vries, Hoeve, Assink, Stams, and Asscher, 2015).

It is common that adolescents may feel strain and frustration for situations they cannot change, as well as perceive injustice. However, those who do not know healthy ways to canalise their anger, are more likely to promote crime-inducing anger. There is evidence that perceived injustice is strongly associated with situational anger and that situational anger, in turn, is strongly associated with delinquency (Rebellon, Manasse, Van Gundy, and Cohn, 2012). Moreover, it seems important to emphasise that the level of anger showed may act in combination with socially defined gender-role expectations and gender-identification to encourage the displacement of anger into forms of aggression (McPhedran, 2009).

2.3.4 Prosocial attitudes

By means of the Control theory, social control can be measured in terms of the individual's attachment to conventional people and commitment to conventional institutions like school. Individuals high in these forms of social control may be less likely to engage in socially unacceptable forms of animal abuse or other violent crimes, since they perceive the costs of such abuse to be high (Agnew, 1998). According to this theory, there is evidence suggesting that participation in prosocial activities may affect substance use and other deviant behaviour among youth because many of these activities are supervised or structured, and the amount of time available for youth to engage in such activities is reduced (Duncan, Duncan, Strycker, and Chaumeton, 2002). For this reason, those involved in physical activity tend to have lower rates of cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use.

Regarding prosocial behaviours, boys and girls who join organised sports show greater participation in other prosocial activities. Gender is significant here since studies often find that boys have higher levels of antisocial behaviour and substance use and other deviant activities than girls (Duncan, Duncan, Strycker, and Chaumeton, 2002).

In summary, empathy is the main focus in preventing violent behaviour because high levels of empathy act as a protective factor, and low levels of empathy act as a risk factor. Nonetheless, the training of other items such as respect, anger and prosocial skills are necessary to reduce the likelihood of developing violent offences.

2.4 Humane education programs

Humane education programs, throughout the development of empathy, may prevent or interrupt a pattern that results in interhuman violence. By the use of animal-related activities, humane education can foster empathy and prosocial attitudes, since empathy toward animals is correlated with empathy toward people (Faver, 2010). Thompson and Gullone (2003) support this view by arguing that animal cruelty and human violence can be reduced by keeping high levels of empathy during childhood.

Despite the relevance of empathy in deviant conducts, there is insufficient evidence to support the view that empathy levels are the key driver of aggressive behaviour against human or animals. As it has been said, empathy is assumed as barely one factor among a host of contributors towards generalised violent and antisocial behaviour patterns. However, due to the long-year experimental study led by Ascione (1997) to primary school children to research the influence of humanitarian education in their conduct, was concluded that the experimental group scored higher in prosocial attitudes than the control group.

Following this line, Ascione (2001) pointed out that the underlying theme of many of the humane education programs is that teaching young people to care for and interact with nurturing manner with animals will reduce the tendency they may have for aggression and violence. Addressing cruelty to animals as a significant form of aggressive and antisocial behaviour may help to understand and prevent youth violence.

Despite the need for research regarding the efficacy of these programs, they work to achieve a range of goals relevant to children and adolescents lives, including the

enhancement of the capacity to form a positive relationship with others, increase the feelings of self-worth, personal competence and mastery and empathy, and reduce the levels of anxiety, depression and antisocial behaviour (McDonald, 2012). In short, humane education programs foster compassion and respect for all life, preventing violent offences during adolescence and adulthood (Faver, 2010). Because of its results, the creation of an human education program seems to be one of the most efficient means to increase the protective factors.

3. PREVENTION PROGRAM

3.1 Program presentation

The program that is presented in this paper is a primary prevention program created to prevent future violent behaviour in youths. Throughout the development of higher levels of empathy and prosocial attitudes, this program follows the aim to prevent violence against humans and non-humans, reduce the incidence of violent situations and encourage positive attitudes toward humans and animals. The target population are youths who study at secondary school, specifically between ages 14 to 16. Considering the content and the methodology employed to develop the program, it is thought to be more appropriate and effective during these specific ages.

Regarding the fact that adult delinquency is frequently related with juvenile aggression (Tremblay, 2003), decreasing juvenile violence rates should reduce general violence rates as well. Throughout this program, empathy will be one of the main focus to achieve prosocial behaviour, which once reached, will help to reduce the likelihood of aggression toward animals and humans. This program will also help teachers to detect domestic and/or peer violence that is already occurring in youths environment.

By means of animal awareness and knowledge about the consequences of young people actions in relation to animal welfare, the designed activities encourage respect, kindness, and responsibility in juvenile's relationships with both human and non-human animals.

3.2 Objective of the program

Following the experience of other programs, education seems to be the most effective mean to teach youths favourable attitudes toward other lives. Due to that fact, the main objective that pursues this program is to reduce the likelihood of youths engaging in interpersonal violence and animal abuse during their adolescence and adulthood.

Furthermore, the specific objectives follow the aim to give youth tools to:

- Increase levels of empathy by teaching respect, kindness and compassion for the vulnerable that need help, being human or non-human.
- Enhance awareness, knowledge and favourable attitudes to respect life, being this human or non-human.

- Learn humane values through voluntary work.
- Learn techniques to deal with anger and frustration.
- Develop attitudes of cooperation, equity and respect between schoolfellows.
- Make responsible choices, and become autonomous and respectful.

3.3 Application context

This program is performed in a public secondary school. It is a school-year program given throughout a weekly mandatory subject called *Àgora*, and the lessons are taught by a trained classroom teacher. The name of the program, *Àgora*, whose origin takes place in the ancient Greek, refers to the space where youths will be able to participate openly and share their opinions and experiences, reaching themselves to their own conclusions and deciding how to act afterwards. The name of *Humanitarian Education* as a subject for teenagers might sound scant stigmatising for them, and may cause them to prejudge the program. For these reasons, *Àgora* seems to be more appropriate.

Despite the fact that the program is put into practise in a secondary school, it is addressed to teenagers without problems (primary prevention) as well as those who have shown being at risk of perpetrating violence (secondary prevention). According to this, the target are youths coursing third and fourth year at secondary school. However, because of every school have some differences in their curriculum, this program does not need to be implemented in any specific year of the second part of Compulsory Secondary Education. Basically, board of directors can decide which one of the two last years is more convenient for them to be taught.

3.4 Methodology

The program is divided in four modules, with an average of nine sessions for each module. In order to reach the program objectives, sessions will be assisted by a guideline of power point slides to help teachers accomplish the goals.

The structure of each module is similar. Essentially, the first session of each block follows the aim to work on new terminology by learning new concepts and perspectives. The following sessions try to be more dynamic and offer students tools to get to know themselves better by working on emotional intelligence, self-esteem and frustration. It also follows the aim to encourage them by thinking about their habits and

thoughts regarding the concepts they have learnt (i.e., racism, sexism or animal abuse in all the possible forms), and promoting alternatives and healthy ways to conduct anger and solve problems (i.e., sport activities or voluntary work).

In every module there is a mandatory book to read related to one of the topics in the unit. The book will be given the first day of each module and there will be a debate in relation to the book during the penultimate session. The purpose of the readings selected is to encourage youths to read more as well as to open new borders and observe their own situations with another perspective.

The last session of every module is meant to be a brainstorm in which, through an open question, youths suggest ways they can help others or actions they can make to improve themselves according to some topics of the module, as well as to discuss points of view in which youths disagree.

Regarding the fact that this program does not follow the objective to force the right behaviour but to make students understand the importance of healthy relationships with animals and people, there will not be a final exam. However, in every session their participation, a proactive attitude and doing the homework will be requested.

3.5 Program content

This program offers a stable intervention that lasts in time. It is composed of thirty-seven sessions during nine months, one hour session every week, which means a long-year school program. Sessions are organised in four modules, and within each module there are approximately nine sessions to work in the main issue.

Module I: Developing empathy

Module I is organised in 8 sessions and is addressed to increase levels of empathy by teaching youths that animals are sentient beings like humans. Working through situations in which animals show their emotions, students can empathise with them. In other words, by enhancing caring and compassionate interactions between youths and animals, this program aims to reduce callousness.

The first session of this module (Session 2) works hard to ensure students can respect each other turn to speak as well as be able to listen and respect other points of view. Besides this, learning body language help them to be more empathic and understand feelings without talking. The main focus of this session is to make clear that students can be themselves and participate actively in this program, for their own benefit. To achieve successful results after the program youths must feel themselves comfortable enough. For that reason, there are two sessions (3 and 4) in which self-esteem and self-confidence is worked to enhance it. Once they accept themselves, it is possible to work through the similarities between human and animal emotions. Being aware of animal feelings increase youths' empathy toward animals. In session 6, animal body language is explained, that is, ethology of dogs and cats since they are the most frequent domestic animals as well as victims of animal abuse. Learning to understand dogs and cats will help to enhance empathy towards them, which may imply a reduction of animal cruelty. In session 7 there is a space where youths can discuss and meditate new actions and changes they can do in their life to improve animal welfare. In session 8 takes place the first book discussion. The book chosen for this block is called *Black Beauty*, by Anna Sewell, and it is narrated in first person by the Black Beauty's horse, relating situations of cruelty and kindness along his life. Last session (9) supposes the closure of the module. This session seeks to make a review of what youths have learnt through this block and facilitate a space where they can share their thoughts and ask questions that can be replied by their fellows.

SUMMARY	
Session 1	Pre test + information about the course planning
Session 2	Learn to listen/respect turn to speak/understand body language
Session 3	Activity to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence I
Session 4	Activity to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence II
Session 5	Animal – human similar emotions
Session 6	Dog and cat ethology
Session 7	How can we help each other?
Session 8	Book discussion: <i>Black Beauty</i>
Session 9	Closure MI: What have I learnt?

Module II: Respect for human-animal life

To achieve respect to both human and animal life, *Module II* is formed by nine sessions that follow the aim to make youths think about their attitudes toward animals, including social accepted and unaccepted animal abuse. Session number 10, which is the first one in this module, offers a new point of view in youths' perspective, talking about important issues such as racism, sexism and speciesism. Through this perspective, students can start to see animals as sentient beings that must be protected. During the following four sessions (11, 12, 13, 14) it is expected to make youths think about all the habits humans do that affect animal lives and welfare. There is a myriad of socially accepted animal abuse such as farm industry, animal experimentation, animals used for entertainment, bullfighting, etc., that may favour the increment of socially unaccepted animal abuse. It is important to enhance them to think about which conducts are right and which social conducts are unacceptable for animal welfare. By getting to that point, students may feel empathy and respect toward animals, which means a change in their behaviour. Comparing which actions are not allowed to do on humans and which are being done in animals, youths can draw their own conclusions.

In session 15, there is an aim to provide students with short legal knowledge, regarding the crimes penalised in humans and animals, as well as the ordinance of their city to be aware which behaviours are allowed, which dog breeds are considered dangerous, or where to go in case they want to report an animal abuse, among others. In the next session (16), youths are ready to discuss how can they help animals, which human actions relating with animal suffering disturb them the most, and what they would like to do to change this situation. The book chosen for this module (session 17) is *Memoirs of a Fighting Dog*, by Keisha Keenleyside. The book is a story of a dog who has been raised to fight and win in the pit, and explains how the dogfighting world works, having chapters of sadness and happiness. Some chapters might be harsh to read, but youths need to know what is behind dogfights since it is a common crime committed by juvenile delinquents. The last session (18) follows the aim to discuss all the points that youth want to talk about and have a brainstorm to get clear the steps they must follow when they witness or are aware of any animal mistreatment.

SUMMARY	
Session 10	Racism – Sexism – Speciesism
Session 11	Socially accepted animal abuse I
Session 12	Socially accepted animal abuse II
Session 13	Socially unaccepted human abuse
Session 14	Socially unaccepted animal abuse
Session 15	Knowledge about the Civic Ordinance + Spanish Penal Code
Session 16	How can I help? Actions and new decisions
Session 17	Book discussion: <i>Memoirs of a Fighting Dog</i>
Session 18	Closure MII: What can I do to help animals in my community?

Module III: Anger and frustration

Module III deals with anger and frustration. This block pretends to expose the most common problems in which youths find themselves, as well as other difficulties they want to share, and help them to think about their reaction to conflicts and how they can manage it.

Following the same methodology, the first two sessions of the module (19, 20) work on youths' emotional intelligence. Learning to understand their own emotions will help them to feel better and visualise a solution instead of seeing a problem. Considering that adolescence is a difficult period *per se*, offering tools to manage their own emotions may help youths to decrease their anger and violent behaviour against humans and animals. In the third session (21), there is a role-play activity where youths can explain a problem (real or not) and, working in small groups, fellows give advice of how they could act to make themselves feel better. By using such activities, classmates help each other to make right decisions, besides working for a higher attachment between fellows. In the next session (22) it is developed the idea that humans make mistakes, but that it is the way to learn. Through this activity, youths learn to accept their past behaviour (if it was inappropriate) and forgive themselves, allowing themselves to act in a healthier way. In session 23, healthy habits are the focus. That implies habits in relation to food, sport, social life, and alcohol and tobacco consume. By implementing some changes in their lifestyle they may feel better. In relation to this session, session 24 and 25 suggest two different alternatives to conduct anger. The first one is a yoga class, which by means of breathing techniques and muscle stretches youths can canalise their ire, and

find some space and time for themselves. The second session is an alternative for those who need to get rid of bad energy, and it is contact sport. By this sport, youths may feel they enhance their masculinity and is a healthy way to increase self-esteem and carry out a healthy lifestyle, since being attached to this sport (or another) they might take care of their habits, as well as feeling physically tired afterwards. In session 26, the book chosen this time is called *Bronxwood*, by Coe Booth, and it is about a young boy facing family troubles and trying not to lose sight of what he wants. The last session (27) seeks the brainstorm in relation to the best way for each student to solve problems. It is important that youths refresh all knowledge they have learnt through the module to be aware of which technique fits better for them.

SUMMARY	
Session 19	Emotional intelligence I
Session 20	Emotional intelligence II
Session 21	Role-play: “situations that make me angry”
Session 22	Mistakes are lessons learned
Session 23	Healthy lifestyle habits
Session 24	Physical activity: yoga + breathing techniques
Session 25	Physical activity: martial arts
Session 26	Book discussion: <i>Bronxwood</i>
Session 27	Closure MIII: How can I face my problems?

Module IV: Prosocial skills

Module IV is composed by nine sessions plus the post-programme questionnaire, and it is addressed to develop prosocial attitudes in youths’ community. There are plenty of activities and voluntary work adolescents can do to help and enlarge their circle of friends. By participating in social activities in their neighbourhood that help animals and humans, youths can feel themselves useful, be aware of animal needs and gain responsibility.

The first session on this block (28) focuses on the concepts of altruism, commitment, and sharing, helping and encouraging others. By being aware of these concepts, youths can adopt a new attitude toward animals and people close to them. In this module there are two excursions (session 29, 32) in which students will be able to see by first hand

how is a dog-shelter, which kind of dog arrives there, which are the most common problems with these dogs, why people abandon them, and the role of the voluntary team, among others. The second excursion consists on a visit to an animal sanctuary, where youths will be able to see the work of people who take care of animals that have been rescued from an abuse or negligence. The objective of these visits is to encourage youths to join a voluntary work. Session 30 follows the aim to work, through a dynamic activity, situations in which people from their surroundings (family members, friends, team colleagues, etc.) may need help and what they can do to help them. Session 31 refreshes Module I when youths think about things they are good at and they can help with. By doing this exercise, youths realise everyone can help somebody effortlessly. In session 33 it is worked the role of the mediator at school. That is, when there is a conflict between fellows, for instance, classmates can take part to solve the problem and help the parts to face the conflict with other perspective, making better choices. In session 34, divided in small groups, students make a presentation in relation to a topic they have chosen, so it can be developed deeply. In session 35 takes place the book debate. In this case, the book is called *Teens with the courage to give: young people who triumphed over tragedy and volunteered to make a difference*, by Jackie Waldman. Throughout this book narrated in first person, students can get inspired by other teens' stories who faced difficult situations, by providing their help and understanding that they are part of the solution to some society problems. Finally, in the last session (36), it is time to the closure of this unit. Students conclude themselves which actions they can do to help their community or to make their life more satisfactory by helping their intimates. In session 37 it is carried out the post-program test, which lasts forty-five minutes and is the same as the pre-program test, in order to the results be compared. The satisfaction questionnaire also takes place in this last session.

SUMMARY

Session 28	Altruism, sharing, helping, encouraging, commitment
Session 29	Excursion: Volunteering in dog-shelters
Session 30	Dynamic: Situations where people I know need help
Session 31	Dynamic: I'm good at... and I can help with...
Session 32	Excursion: What are sanctuaries?
Session 33	The importance of the mediator

Session 34	Classmates presentations
Session 35	Book discussion: <i>Teens with the courage to give: young people who triumphed over tragedy and volunteered to make a difference</i>
Session 36	Closure MIV: How can I help to make my community fairer? + Closure Program
Session 37	Post-program test + Satisfaction questionnaire

3.6 Instruments, materials and resources

For the development of this program there is no specific material required besides some slideshows to support the sessions with pictures and questions, that can be uploaded in the school platform so the students can download it. However, four reading books for each student are required. According to the board of directors, books can be offered by the school without any charge, can be bought by students, or can be downloaded by e-book if available.

Since most of the sessions are developed in the classroom, that will be the only space needed. Nevertheless, there are two excursions on the outskirts that will need school bus to move students, and two other physical activities that will be performed at the school gym.

4. EVALUATION

4.1 Objective of the evaluation

With the aim to evaluate the efficacy of the program in increasing levels of empathy toward animals and humans, and therefore the non-participation of youths in the development of violent behaviour, it has been developed a questionnaire. In order to create this questionnaire, the following references have been used as a source of inspiration and basic knowledge: Taylor-Powell, E. (1998); Dahlberg, L. L., Toal, S. B., Swahn, M. H., and Behrens, C. B. (2005); Muñoz, M. J., González Lozano, P., Fernández González, L., Sebastián, J., Peña, M. E., and Perol, O. (2010).

4.2 Methodology

The evaluation of this program occurs at the beginning of the scholar course, that is, before the first session of the program, and after the last session of the program. The questionnaire (Annex 1) is composed of 45 items, divided in four blocks, which are demographic information, empathy, violent behaviour, and self-esteem. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements. Four different answers for each item are possible. The value is one point to “strongly disagree”, two points for “disagree”, three points for “neither agree nor disagree”, four points for “agree”, and five points to “strongly agree”, except those items that are purposely reverse scored. “Neither agree or disagree” is included to avoid biased answers, since the other possible answers may not reflect accurately their position.

Higher mean scores will indicate higher levels of empathy, higher levels of violence and higher levels of self-esteem. Having higher levels on empathy and self-esteem will mean positive result. Lower mean scores will indicate lower levels of empathy, lower levels of violence and lower levels of self-esteem. The suitable result obtained through this questionnaire after the program are high levels of empathy and self-esteem, and low levels of violent attitudes.

Block one collects demographic information. It is requested descriptive aspects of the sample as their sex and age. Relational aspects are also required such as who they live with, since single-parent families, especially mothers who live alone with their kids, are

more likely to develop deviant behaviour in youths than two-parent families (Wright and Wright, 1993), and whether they own animals or not. According to a study led by Daly and Morton (2003), individuals who live with both dogs and cats are more empathic than those who only have dogs or cats, and also more empathic than those who do not own a dog nor a cat. There are no scores in this first block.

Block two evaluates the level of empathy. Items 7 to 16 focus on youths' feelings and beliefs toward animals and people. Situations in which respondents can see themselves are exposed, and youths choose the option they agree the most. Item 9 is reverse scored. Scores ranging from 10 to 50 are possible. Higher scores indicate greater level of empathy.

Block three analyses youths' violent behaviour. Items 17 to 31 measure attitudes toward violence and its acceptability, particularly in relation to fighting. Most of the items are relative to interhuman violence, asking about couple, peer and family relationships. There is only one item related to animal abuse. Items 17, 23 and 31 are reverse scored. A sum of 75 points are possible, being the minimum score 15. Higher scores indicate a positive attitude toward violent methods and limited use of nonviolent strategies. Lower scores would act as a protective factor.

Block four scores youths' self-esteem. Items 32 to 45 measure self-concept and perception of the attitudes and relationships they have with their parents and friends. Items 34, 35, 41 and 44 are reverse scored. A total score of 70 is possible by summing across all items. The minimum score is 14. Higher scores indicate a stable self-esteem.

4.2.1 Short-term evaluation

The pre-program test follows the objective to conclude the level of empathy, violent behaviour and self-esteem that students show before the program starts, to be able to compare it with the post-program questionnaire results, and evaluate its effectiveness.

In order to compare its efficiency, there is an experimental group, which will attend the long-year program, and a control group, which will not be trained. The questionnaire will be responded four times, that is, two times (pre and post program) for the experimental group and two times for the comparison group. Both groups will have

similar demographic characteristics since there are more than one class per course. Class A will attend the program and Class B will be the control sample. The sample size expected is about 30-35 students for each group. The test will take place the same day in both samples (September – June).

4.2.2 Follow-up evaluation

With the aim to evaluate the durability of the knowledge and the results obtained after the finalisation of the program, respondents of both experimental and control group will be required at the age of 26 years to observe how they fare in adulthood (Moffitt, Caspi, Harrington, and Milne, 2002). That is, the objective when participants are adults is to evaluate their levels of empathy, self-esteem and violent behaviour, and their participation in the community, as well as their beliefs and habits.

Participants will be contacted to meet at the school centre to respond the same questionnaire, even though it will be updated at their age (Annex 2). By asking them to meet personally, their participation is mostly guaranteed. The questionnaire is anonymous, however, participants have an identification number which helps to match the pre and post test, and also the long-term test, to be able to evaluate each case deeper, since the results can vary.

4.2.3 Satisfaction questionnaire to participants and teachers

Since youths are the main focus in the development of this program, it seems interesting to know their opinion about the program content and its application. That questionnaire (Annex 3) will take place during the last session of the program (37), after the post-program questionnaire. The questions will be related to the content and methodology of the sessions, and the teacher's skills to lead the sessions.

However, teachers also play a significant role to the achievement of the results. For that reason, they will be requested to respond a brief questionnaire (Annex 4) in relation to the methodology of the program, the content, and the main difficulties they have found, as well as suggestions such other reading books, activities, etc., to make the program more effective.

5. DISCUSSION - CONCLUSION

As it has been exposed through the literature review, early childhood seems to be the most adequate moment to prevent violent behaviour. However, the risk of committing violent crimes appears during adolescence. Offending rates appear highest at the age of 17, and drop hastily in young adulthood. That might be explained because during adolescence there are biological, psychological and sociological changes that increase their opportunity to develop antisocial behaviour.

The connection between cruelty to animals in childhood–early adolescence and adult violent criminal behaviour has been a topic of interest for decades, being animal abuse very related with other criminal offences such as domestic violence, peer violence or bestiality. For that reason, animal abuse can be a warning sign of future violent behaviour, but may also help to identify youths who are being victimized themselves.

Empathy seems to be the most effective mean to reduce violent behaviour in youths. Nevertheless, empathy by itself is not enough to avoid violent behaviour, and because of that, the proposed program follows the aim to enhance respect toward humans and non-humans, give youths tools to manage their anger and frustration, and encourage prosocial attitudes.

5. 1 Limitations

With regard to the limitations of the program, there are three limitations that could interfere in the results obtained. The first limitation is the sample size. That is, the program is thought to be carried out in two groups (experimental and control), which means a total of 65-70 youths. However, only 30-35 students participate in the program during the school year to evaluate its effectiveness. As a consequence of the small size of the sample, the results obtained cannot be extrapolated.

The second limitation is related with the process of data recollection. Youths are requested to respond themselves two questionnaires, and that fact can provoke two main problems when it is time to analyse the results. On the one hand, youths' perception is subjective, and they may have a tendency to increase or decrease their actions and believes, according to their understanding. On the other hand, some respondents may

select the same answer independently of the item asked. Because of that problematic, it would be interesting to have an interview with all the participants to complement the questionnaire, obtaining more reliable results.

One last limitation could take place after the program, when it is time for the follow-up evaluation. It can occur that some of the youths who were supposed to be evaluated after a period of time, it is not possible to contact them, not being able to analyse the same sample size as the post-program questionnaire.

5.2 Efficacy, strengths and weaknesses of the program

The expected results after the implementation of the program are enhancing kindness, compassion, respect and responsibility toward animal welfare, and being able to extrapolate these feelings from animals to people. Also respecting animal life as well as human life, and using tools to manage anger and other conflicts. Finally, it will be great if youths show prosocial attitudes and develop voluntary activities in their community.

In relation to the strengths of the program, the content of this primary prevention program is innovative, interesting, and promising, having never been applied before in the Spanish context. If the results obtained through the program are significant, its application in other schools around Spain will be approachable. Moreover, the program is sustainable by itself, since it does not need much economical resources. On the other hand, if participants show complicity and cohesion between them, and feel motivated to take part of this program, that will help to achieve the expected results. Lastly, the program offers a guide to help teachers lead the sessions, which facilitates their work and ensure its correct application.

Concerning the weaknesses of the program, the first problem that can be found is that the effectiveness of the program depends on the attitude of the participants. If youths have prejudices before starting the sessions that do not allow them to have an open-minded attitude, do not show interest in the subject, do not participate, do not do the homework, all of these aspects may complicate the achievement of the goals. Another problem relies on parents. As participants are under eighteen years old, an authorisation of their parents must be required. It can occur that some parents do not agree with the

idea of their children taking part in the program, and deny their participation, making smaller the sample size.

In conclusion, school is one of the basis of children education. Nevertheless, family also plays a significant role, as important as school, and sometimes the messages children receive from both parts are opposed. For this reason, preventing youth violence from school helps, but it would be more effective if schools and families worked together. Finally, for further research, it would be interesting to create a program that starts in early childhood until late adolescence, adapted at every stage of their life according to their cognition, as a subject in which youths are taught respect for all sentient beings since they join school.

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7. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Questionnaire pre-post program

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify the relationship between teenagers and their environment. The questionnaire is anonymous, so please do not write your name. The information collected is confidential and will be only used for academic purposes.

The following block asks you about personal information. Please make a circle in the selected answer.

Block one

1. Sex:

- a. Male
- b. Female

2. Age:

- a. 14
- b. 15
- c. 16
- d. 17

3. My parents are separated/divorced.

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. I live at home with _____

5. I have/had pets at home.

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. My pet is/was a:

- a. Dog
- b. Cat
- c. Other _____

In the following blocks, you will be asked about your relationship with your family, friends and peers. Please circle the selected answer.

Block two

7. I'm sensitive to other people's feelings, even if I don't know them.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

8. If I saw an abandoned dog, I'd provide him some food and water.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

9. I get upset when my friends feel down.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

10. If I witnessed someone beating an animal, I'd feel very sad.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

11. If I say something mean to someone, I feel bad afterwards.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

12. I get upset if I see an animal being hurt.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

13. It feel sad for the classmates that are being bullied.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

14. I feel sorry for animals that live in captivity.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

15. If I yell to my dog (or someone else's dog) for something he did, I feel bad because he looks at me afraid.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

16. When I walk by someone who needs help, I feel like helping somehow.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

Block three

17. Couples must always respect each other physically and mentally.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

18. I encourage my friends to fight if they have a problem with someone.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

19. When I'm angry, I respond with a physical attack.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

20. Sometimes violence is the only way to express my feelings.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

21. It's fine to kick my dog if he doesn't obey me.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

22. A boy angry enough to hit his girlfriend must love her very much.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

23. If something or someone is getting on my nerves, I breath deeply to calm down myself.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree

- e. Strongly agree

24. In the last year (last 12 months), I have slapped or kicked someone.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

25. A girl angry enough to hit her boyfriend must love him very much.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

26. If a student hits me first, my family would want me to hit him back.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

27. Boys sometimes deserve to be hit by their girlfriends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

28. Sometimes I use force to obtain what I want.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree

- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

29. Violence between couples is a personal matter and people should not interfere.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

30. If I fought with another student, my family would be mad at me.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

31. Girls sometimes deserve to be hit by their boyfriends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

Block four

32. Helping others makes me feel good.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

33. In general, I'm satisfied with myself.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

34. I wish I were different because I'd have more friends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

35. I often feel worthless at school.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

36. I can achieve what I want if I try hard.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

37. I feel my parents care about me.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

38. I have a number of good qualities.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

39. I can trust my friends and tell them my problems.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

40. I feel appreciated for my friends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

41. I don't like myself very much.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

42. I usually get on well with everyone.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

43. I feel I'm as smart as my classmates.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

44. No one pays much attention to me at home.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

45. It's easy for me to make new friends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

Thank you very much for your participation.

Annex 2: Follow-up questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the durability of the program implemented in 2017 in your secondary school. The questionnaire is anonymous, so please do not write your name. The information collected is confidential and will be only used for academic purposes.

The following block asks you about personal information. Please make a circle in the selected answer.

Block one

- 1. Sex:**
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
- 2. Age:**_____
- 3. I live at home with**_____
- 4. I have pets at home.**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 5. My pet is a:**
 - a. Dog
 - b. Cat
 - c. Other_____

In the following blocks, you will be asked about your relationship with your family, friends and peers. Please circle the selected answer.

Block two

- 6. I'm sensitive to other people's feelings, even if I don't know them.**
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree

7. If I saw an abandoned dog, I'd provide him some food and water.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

8. I get upset when my friends feel down.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

9. If I witnessed someone beating an animal, I'd feel very sad.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

10. If I say something mean to someone, I feel bad afterwards.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

11. I get upset if I see an animal being hurt.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree

- e. Strongly agree

12. It feel sad for the people that are bullied at school or at work.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

13. I feel sorry for animals that live in captivity.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
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14. If I yell to my dog (or someone else's dog) for something he did, I feel bad because he looks at me afraid.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
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15. When I walk by someone who needs help, I feel like helping somehow.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

Block three

16. Couples must always respect each other physically and mentally.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

17. I encourage my friends to fight if they have a problem with someone.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
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18. When I'm angry, I respond with a physical attack.

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- b. Disagree
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30. Girls sometimes deserve to be hit by their boyfriends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

Block four

31. Helping others makes me feel good.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

32. In general, I'm satisfied with myself.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
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33. I wish I were different because I'd have more friends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
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34. I often feel worthless at work.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree

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35. I can achieve what I want if I try hard.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
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36. I feel my family and couple care about me.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

37. I have a number of good qualities.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
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- b. Disagree
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43. No one pays much attention to me.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
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- e. Strongly agree

44. It's easy for me to make new friends.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

Thank you very much for your participation.

Annex 3: Satisfaction questionnaire to participants

The following questions ask you about your level of satisfaction with the program that has been developed. Please select the number you agree the most, being 1 (I don't agree at all), and 5 (I totally agree). The questionnaire is anonymous, and the information collected is confidential and will be only used for academic purposes.

1. Sex: a) Male b) Female	
2. Age:_____	
3. The content of the program was useful and interesting.	1 2 3 4 5
4. My knowledge has increased throughout this program.	1 2 3 4 5
5. The program have changed my point of view in a good way.	1 2 3 4 5
6. The activities developed at class were appropriate to work the topics.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I have felt comfortable attending these sessions.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I feel I get along better with my classmates after the program.	1 2 3 4 5
9. The reading books were suitable and interesting to read.	1 2 3 4 5
10. The teacher led the sessions properly.	1 2 3 4 5
11. The teacher allowed us to lead the debates sometimes.	1 2 3 4 5
12. Would you like to write some suggestions?	

Annex 4: Satisfaction questionnaire to teachers

The following questions ask you about your level of satisfaction with the program that has been developed. Please select the number you agree the most, being 1 (I don't agree at all), and 5 (I totally agree).

1. Name of the teacher:	
2. Institution:	
3. The duration of the program have been appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5
4. The schedule of the sessions has been appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5
5. The time to develop the program has been appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5
6. The activities programmed have been appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5
7. The environment of the classroom has been adequate.	1 2 3 4 5
Students	
8. Students have shown interest during the progress of the program.	1 2 3 4 5
9. Students have usually done the homework.	1 2 3 4 5
10. Students have participated actively on the debates and activities carried out.	1 2 3 4 5
Teacher	
11. I feel satisfied with the methodology to teach-learn the content of this program.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I have noticed throughout the program some students changing their behaviour.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I feel satisfied, generally, with the content and visible results of the program.	1 2 3 4 5
14. Would you like to make a suggestion?	